



Lynn Fitch
ATTORNEY GENERAL
OPINIONS AND POLICY

December 11, 2024

The Honorable Thomas E. Tuggle II
Sheriff, DeSoto County
3091 Industrial Drive West
Hernando, Mississippi 38632

Re: Training Requirements

Dear Sheriff Tuggle:

The Office of the Attorney General has received your request for an official opinion.

Question Presented

Does training and certification to conduct critical incident debriefings through the Tennessee Public Safety Network meet the legal definition of “certified peer support member” in Mississippi Code Annotated Section 13-1-22.1(1)(a)?

Brief Response

Section 13-1-22.1(1)(a) requires a “certified peer support member” to have critical incident stress management training and to be certified by the Mississippi State Board of Health or the Mississippi Department of Public Safety.

Applicable Law and Discussion

Section 13-1-22.1(1)(a) provides in pertinent part:

(1) As used in this section, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

(a) “Certified peer support member” means a law enforcement officer, fireman or emergency medical technician of an emergency service agency or entity *who has received training in critical incident stress management and who is certified as a peer support member by the State Board of Health or the Department of Public Safety* to provide emotional and moral support to an emergency responder who needs those services as a result of job-related stress

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or an incident in which the emergency responder was involved while acting in his official capacity.

(emphasis added). Section 13-1-22.1(1)(a) is clear that a certified peer support member's certification must be by the Mississippi State Board of Health or Mississippi Department of Public Safety. However, whether the training provided in your request meets the statutory requirement is a determination to be made by one of the two agencies.

If this office may be of any further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

LYNN FITCH, ATTORNEY GENERAL

By: */s/ Abigail C. Overby*

Abigail C. Overby
Special Assistant Attorney General

OFFICIAL OPINION